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President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) *(interpretation from French)*: First, I would like to thank the representatives of Finland and of Thailand for their outstanding efforts in organizing so well the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. With much skill and with great integrity, they have conducted the work in a generally satisfactory manner. I wish them good luck and every success in the long and difficult task ahead.

The Lao delegation would like today to reaffirm its well-known position, which has been stated repeatedly both here in plenary meeting and in the Open-ended Working Group. We believe that there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council by increasing its membership so as to better reflect the new global political realities and in particular — I repeat, in particular — to improve the representation of the developing countries. Like many other delegations, we continue to believe that the number of both permanent and non-permanent members should increase. Indeed, the Lao delegation believes that an increase in the number of permanent members, from both developed and developing countries, would strengthen the United Nations and its legitimacy because the Organization would thus better reflect the new international political configuration. An increase in the non-permanent members is no less important. Such an increase would allow more States to hold seats on and participate in the work of the Council, thus increasing its credibility.

As for the criteria for selecting new permanent and non-permanent members, my delegation takes note of the observations and proposals that have been made, and we hope that a formula acceptable to all will soon be found. We believe that — because of their importance and their political and economic influence — countries such as Germany, Japan and India should be become permanent members of a newly expanded Security Council.

After more than three years of lengthy, difficult discussions, we have arrived at a point where, we believe, we should assess the situation. It is important to know whether we are at an impasse. If we are not, let us continue and let us make greater efforts and work with renewed vigour towards our common goal: the strengthening of the effectiveness of the Security Council. If, on the other hand, we are at an impasse, we must have the courage to ask the following questions: What can we do? Why has this come about? And how can we work together to find a realistic solution to this problem? This is what my delegation wishes to tell the Assembly at the crucial stage of our debate. Our delegation is prepared to consider any new, realistic approach which would help to advance the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

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We commend certain measures that the Security Council has already taken to improve its practices and working methods so as to make them more transparent. We are on the right path, and we should continue in this direction. However, much still remains to be done. Accordingly, we still are of the view that the Council must inform and consult non-members of the Council that are affected by its decisions. Even more important, those countries should have the right to state their positions to the Council publicly, before the Council embarks on informal consultations, and they should also be able to be present as observers in informal consultations of the whole on the item relating to them. This practice can only be beneficial, because the Council, by hearing from these countries, would understand them better and would therefore be in a better position to contribute to a solution to the conflict in question.

The question of the reform of the Council is neither simple nor easy. It is of unprecedented complexity. We are neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic. Let us work together with patience and perseverance but, in particular, with greater vigour. With collaboration and consultation among all, we very sincerely believe that we can go forward.

Mr. Bjørn Lian (Norway): I have the honour to speak on this agenda item on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Allow me first to say that the Nordic countries consider reform of the Security Council an urgent priority. We have therefore participated actively in the work of the Open-ended Working Group, and we submitted a revised Nordic position paper in June last year. The basic elements of that paper are still valid and I would like to go briefly through some important elements of the Nordic position.

First of all, the fundamental objective of Security Council reform should be, as we see it, to strengthen the capacity of the Council to discharge its duties in accordance with the Charter. The Nordic countries support an increase in the permanent as well as in the non-permanent membership of the Council. The permanent membership should be increased by five new seats. These new permanent seats should be allocated with the aim of having the Security Council better reflect present political and economic realities, including improved representation in the Council from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to ensure equitable geographical representation, it is also essential to increase the number of non-permanent seats. For these seats, regions should be encouraged to establish equitable rotation systems, and the re-election ban should be maintained. The total membership of the Council should lie in the low to mid-twenties; in the Nordic position paper we have suggested 23.

The question of the decision-making procedures of the Council needs thorough consideration. Different aspects of the voting procedure — such as the scope of the veto and its possible extension to new permanent members — are interrelated. These questions are likely to be settled only as part of a comprehensive reform of the Council, and should therefore be addressed by the Working Group in that perspective.

The Nordic countries encourage the implementation of further measures that enjoy broad support and which have the aim of improving the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work. We welcome the steps that the Council has taken in this respect. We attach particular importance to the new arrangements established for consultations with troop-contributing countries.

After long deliberations, the Working Group submitted quite a substantive report to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We welcome that report. It includes a great deal of convergence of views on several issues. The discussions in the Working Group during the last session were thorough and useful. A number of interesting proposals were made with a view to facilitating compromise solutions to the complex problems involved. We consider that major elements of a comprehensive reform are now on the table, and that the Working Group should move to a more concrete phase in its work as soon as it resumes its deliberations. We note that this view was also expressed by a number of speakers during the general debate at this session of the General Assembly.

The Nordic countries thus feel that the time is now ripe for the Working Group to move away from a general discussion and to engage in real negotiations. But, at the same time, we are aware that the subject matter before us is politically both complicated and sensitive. Mindful of the necessity to avoid a political impasse, it is essential that we all approach the process we are engaged in in a positive manner and continue to actively explore creative and constructive ideas on how to meet the various concerns involved. The Nordic countries stand ready to make our contribution to such efforts. The Nordic

countries pledge their full support to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Bureau in the very important work you have before you.

Mr. Shah (India): Mr. President, as the Assembly continues its consideration of agenda item 47, I would like to take this opportunity to place on record my delegation's appreciation of your predecessor, Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral's, sagacious guidance of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. I would like to also thank the co-Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and of Thailand, for their untiring efforts in steering the discussions during the last session.

The comprehensive and substantive report of the Working Group, contained in document A/50/47, is a vivid reflection of the status of deliberations on the subject. It places in perspective all aspects of the work undertaken on this vital issue thus far, indicates the complexities, highlights areas of congruence, delineates prevalent trends and clarifies the continuing differences. It is a reflection of the progress achieved so far. It is also a testimony to the fact that, given time, sustained efforts and patience, consensual progress can be achieved in regard to the unresolved issues before the Working Group.

The annexes to the report are a reflection of the seriousness with which Member States have approached the subject. As many as 10 of the working papers submitted during the course of the last session focused on the core issue of membership, four dealt with the veto and decision-making process, and three were related to various aspects of the Council's working methods. This is in addition to the wealth of ideas suggested earlier and compiled in document A/49/965. Briefly, the discussions have evoked widespread interest and multifaceted responses. The opinions expressed are an indication of the vibrancy of the deliberations and the ingenuity that Member States have brought to the consideration of this important yet complex subject.

India was among the 10 Member States that initiated the process of the inscription of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at the thirty-fourth session. The imperatives of expansion and reform that spurred that initial step have been subsumed in the mandate provided to the Open-ended Working Group, owing to the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries, and to changes in international relations. Consequently, suggestions for solutions have to address the problem of the imbalance in the representative nature of the Security Council and should not accentuate existing inequities.

India's views on the question of expansion of the Security Council are well known and were most recently reiterated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of India in his address to the General Assembly on 4 October, when he stated,

> "India supports expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. We are against piecemeal or temporary solutions which discriminate against developing countries. We believe that the same yardstick must be applied to all countries, developed or developing, from all regions or groups, for induction as permanent members. We believe that under any objectively derived criteria for the expansion of permanent members, India would be an obvious candidate." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 22nd meeting, p. 15)*

My delegation welcomes the decision taken at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to extend the tenure of the Working Group. We expect that when the Group reconvenes next year, it will proceed to build upon the progress already achieved. We encourage the Group to work towards consensus-building on the major issue of expansion of the Security Council. For the Group to achieve a just and lasting solution to this very important issue, the prevailing suspicion that some parties might still be considering a quick fix must be eliminated through transparency and honesty.

It has been suggested on occasion that one country or the other should be added to the permanent category without going through a process of selection on the basis of relevant criteria. Paragraph 28 of the report acknowledges that criteria have been suggested by Member States to serve as the basis for selection. We believe that it would be prudent and beneficial for the Working Group to examine this further and come up with an acceptable set of criteria against which the claims of every country could be assessed. Selection should follow rather than precede the establishment of criteria.

The non-aligned countries emphasized in the Cartagena Summit Declaration that any attempt to exclude non-aligned countries from an expansion in the membership of the Security Council would be unacceptable. This and other important proposals made by

the Non-Aligned Movement have found wide acceptance in the Open-ended Working Group. The legitimacy and efficacy of the Security Council is directly linked to its representative nature. It is a recognition of this reality that in paragraph 26 of the report of the Working Group it is explicitly stated:

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable." *(A/50/47)*

India believes that in our discussion on the reform package, the Council's working methods and decision-making procedures should also necessarily receive adequate attention. The report of the Working Group highlights that the consideration of this aspect has "deepened" and that there is "a considerable convergence" of views. A number of imaginative, innovative and far-reaching proposals have been made. They are based on the premise that since the Council acts under the fiduciary responsibility bestowed by Member States, it has an obligation to take cognizance of their views, be transparent in decision-making, not encroach on the jurisdiction of the General Assembly, and adjust and adapt to the aspirations and needs of the Member States. Reform of the Security Council's working methods and decision-making procedures is intrinsic to any comprehensive outcome.

The reform of the United Nations in all its aspects is our collective responsibility. Such reform must address not only the failings of the past but also the needs of the future. The reform of the Security Council is cardinal to any reform of the United Nations. Such reform should therefore be undertaken on the sound basis of durability, resilience and experience rather than expediency and artificial time-frames designed to force the pace. Decisions on an issue as important as the structure, composition and functioning of the Security Council cannot be taken but by consensus.

Mr. President, my delegation has noted the promptness with which you have moved in constituting the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group. May I assure you that India will constructively support your efforts when the Group resumes its work next year.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The latest report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/50/47) marks, in my delegation's view, the first truly substantive account of the status and progress of discussions on issues before the Group since its inception. More importantly, the report records a growing convergence of views and wide support in the Group on many issues. However, it also reflects differences on key issues.

The issue of increased membership in the Security Council cannot be considered in isolation but has to be addressed in the context of the reform of the Council, reforms towards greater transparency and democracy of its working methods and towards a more balanced relationship with the General Assembly. In terms of our work, this should translate into aiming for an agreement consisting of significant elements relating to an expanded size and a more representative composition of the Council, the enhanced transparency of the Council's working methods and the democratization of its decision-making process.

Although there has long been agreement to expand the membership of the Security Council, the Group remains deadlocked on the issue of expanding permanent membership. Efforts must therefore focus on finding common ground for a compromise on this issue. In this connection, the Group should explore various options, which, in turn, could principally be based on the existing proposals on expansion as well as on any future submissions. Some of these options could include, first, the 2+3 formula or other combinations of increases in permanent and non-permanent seats, including the regional rotation of permanent seats; secondly, the shared-seat formula; thirdly, proposals for purely non-permanent expansion; and finally, the Non-Aligned Movement proposal for an expansion of non-permanent members for the time being, if no agreement is reached on permanent members. We suggest that all the proposals falling under these broad options be examined with a view to identifying their common elements or identifying those proposals that could form the basis for compromise.

The issue of the Council's working methods constitutes a vital and essential component of this exercise. The Group should aim at building upon the report's observation in paragraph 20 that "discussions showed a considerable convergence of views" on the issue of the working methods and transparency of the Security Council. The Group should aim to recommend to the General Assembly at an early date concrete and specific measures on the basis of existing written and oral proposals on this subject, which, as stated in paragraph 22 of the report, "received wide support in the Open-ended Working Group". These proposals are geared towards

making the Council's working methods more transparent or open as well as enhancing the relationship between the Council and the general membership and other principal United Nations organs.

The Group should also devote serious attention to specific measures which would contribute to the democratization of the Council's decision-making process. Towards this end, the proposals on the table deserve full consideration by the Group, including those on the veto. The veto is an integral part of the issue of decision-making, and we look forward to a meaningful outcome on that subject.

My delegation believes that at its next round of substantive discussions the Working Group should aim at translating the "wide support" on issues or proposals indicated in the report into concrete recommendations. It should also seek to reconcile differences on the other issues. Although the report would serve as a good starting point for the Working Group's next round of discussions, the Group might wish to consider subsequently, at the appropriate time, the feasibility of working on the basis of a discussion paper or approximate draft discussion text. The content of this paper would naturally depend on the state of play at the time, if ever, when it is considered feasible. What is important is that such a paper could facilitate and focus our consideration of all relevant issues by enabling us to move away from the past format of general statements and reactions.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The subject before us is undoubtedly the most important of all, as it involves changing the structure of the organ of greatest political power in the Organization: the Security Council. Therefore, the task of the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group is also, as we see it, the most difficult. My delegation is fully aware of all this and therefore wishes once again to congratulate Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand on the work they have accomplished, and in particular for the preparation of the final document.

It can be seen from what I have said that my country attaches prime importance to this subject, and, without prejudice to our own ideas for contributing to the modernization of the Security Council, we will always be prepared to study and discuss any other initiative in order to contribute to the achievement of a broad consensus.

It is Uruguay's view, first of all, that a reform of the composition of the Security Council would contribute to a political updating of its structure, thereby giving it greater representativity. The changes that have taken place in the world since the signing of the San Francisco Charter and since the only expansion of the Council which took place in 1965, have been of enormous importance, and it can be stated unequivocally that these changes could not have been foreseen by most world leaders, scholars and observers of the political scene.

The Security Council is the essentially political organ created under the Charter. Since its structure, competence and decision-making process were established accordingly, it must inevitably be restructured in line with changes to the foundation on which it has rested. It is therefore Uruguay's view that the composition and number of its members, both permanent and non-permanent, should be structured in accordance with the new political reality.

Secondly, it is Uruguay's view that any change in the number of its members, bearing in mind not only the size of the Council but also its decision-making mechanism, should take account of the fact that the Security Council is intrinsically an executive organ, and the change should therefore not affect this essential characteristic. This would mean the paralysis of the organ, and thus the end of the Organization.

Thirdly, in keeping with its deepest democratic convictions, and in concurrence with virtually all the statements made by the political leaders who attended the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Uruguay agrees with the need to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly. We therefore believe that it is the right time to begin to discuss proposals to that end.

In this connection, my delegation submitted an initiative aimed at beginning to reduce the absolute power of the right of veto. This proposal is contained in annex XII and has been issued as document A/AC.247/1996/CRP.14. The proposal is based on the fact that the veto mechanism is contained in most democratic constitutions in the world today. Its goal is to balance the relationship between the executive and legislative branches in states of law. Thus, everyone is quite familiar with the veto power of executive branches and the power of parliaments to override vetoes by a given majority. The mechanism allows for various gradations in implementation, and therefore its application to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly could be the subject of broad negotiations.

For example, there could be negotiations on when it would be appropriate for the General Assembly to intervene; on the possibility of the Assembly acting only in cases where a single Member State has exercised veto power; on the possibility of the Assembly intervening when more than one State has exercised veto power; and on the necessary majority for the General Assembly to override a veto.

Such a mechanism would undeniably contribute to meeting the aspirations reiterated by almost all the political leaders of the world and expressed at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly. We have no doubt that such a mechanism would do both.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it is Uruguay's view that any Security Council reform must be uncomplicated so as to avoid any major modification to the Charter, to preserve the essence of its basic tenets and not to alter its purposes and principles. One of these principles is the sovereign equality of all States, which must be amply applied in whatever procedures are used to agree on the admission of new States to the Security Council. These procedures must be transparently democratic, for the admission both of permanent and of non-permanent members, and must not in any way allow the creation of new categories of States, which would deepen the original differences contained in the Charter.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I would like to begin with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done by Ambassadors Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Asda Jayanama of Thailand, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The progress made in the Working Group is to a very large extent the result of their tireless efforts, their diplomatic skill, their perseverance and their patience. The General Assembly is thus given the opportunity to discuss the report of the Working Group (A/50/47 and Add.1) and to deliberate on the progress made thus far.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the most important reforms needed in the United Nations system. It is also one of the most sensitive reforms, and it is most clearly overdue.

The reasons for the needed reform of the Security Council have been stated and restated many times. As a result, consensus has been practically achieved on the understanding that the Security Council must be expanded and its working methods improved.

All this is necessary in order to give the Security Council a more representative character, more support among the United Nations Members and a higher level of legitimacy. Furthermore, the right kind of expansion would strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council and contribute to the authority of the United Nations in general.

I do not wish to present the views of Slovenia on the question of reform of the Security Council in detail at this stage. We explained our views in some detail on many occasions in the Working Group. Furthermore, our basic positions are represented among the submissions by Member States and groups of Member States on pages 68-71 of the English text of last year's report (A/49/965). Slovenia joined a group of Member States with similar views and continues to hold those basic views reflected in the document mentioned.

Let me only mention that Slovenia is among those Member States that favour an increase in both categories of members of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent. An increase of up to five additional permanent seats would be appropriate. Such an increase should take into account the need for regional representativeness and the willingness and the capacity of the candidates for new permanent seats to contribute to the global maintenance of international peace and security. As stated on earlier occasions, Slovenia sees Germany and Japan among the candidates for new permanent seats.

Furthermore, there should be an appropriate increase in non-permanent membership. We believe that a Security Council composed of a total number of up to 25 members would be adequately representative and would, at the same time, enhance the possibilities for effective action of the Council on behalf of all Member States.

We also believe that the rule of non-eligibility of a retiring non-permanent member of the Security Council should remain as a necessary safeguard against any form of indirect or de facto permanence in the membership of the Security Council.

In the area of improvement of methods of work, we continue to favour all those improvements which strengthen the transparency of the work of the Security

Council and create closer cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

As we read this year's report of the Working Group, and as we recall the discussions preceding the finalization of the report, we clearly recognize that further progress needs to be made. We cannot be satisfied with what has been achieved so far. Last year there was still a great deal of repetition, and many general statements were made which did not lead to a genuine exchange of views. As recognized in paragraph 23 of the report, it also became clear that a number of Member States were not ready to take final positions on the questions of the size and composition of the Security Council because of the interlinkages between the size and composition and other matters in the mandate of the Working Group. Hence the feeling that not enough progress has yet been made.

On the other hand, however, we see in the report of the Working Group several new elements which require careful discussion in the present session of the General Assembly and further elaboration in the context of the negotiations to follow, next year. Let me address a few of them.

In paragraph 20 of the report we find reference to a considerable convergence of views on the question of the methods of work of the Security Council and to the fact that the current improvements in the working methods of the Council have been encouraged by discussions in the Working Group. This is a very welcome evolution.

We would like to encourage those innovations made this year in the work of the Security Council which enhance the cooperation between the Council and the general membership of the United Nations. The practice of holding open orientation debates, based on a concept originally presented by France, has had a successful beginning, and we would like to encourage the Security Council to continue with it. In addition to providing an opportunity for the United Nations Member States to participate in the discussion preceding the decision-making stage in the Security Council, this new practice has also helped clarify the distinction between debates, which can benefit from the variety of views expressed by Member States, and the negotiation of resolutions which remain the responsibility of the members of the Security Council.

We suggest that the Working Group continue to explore the possibility of involving States which are not members of the Security Council in the work of the Council at the discussion stage. In that regard, useful ideas have been suggested in the working papers by the Czech Republic and by Argentina and New Zealand. These papers are mentioned in the report, in paragraph 22, and we would like them to be discussed further at a subsequent stage of the work of the Working Group.

The sections of the report devoted to the issues of the size and composition of the Security Council and on its decision-making reveal the difficulties which still need to be resolved.

In addition to this we are reminded, in paragraph 24 of the report, of the implications of an expansion of the Security Council for equitable geographical distribution. Indeed, this Charter requirement might be affected, depending on the final agreement on the total increase in the number of members of the Security Council, and careful calculation will be necessary before final agreement is reached in order to ensure that all regional groups, including, in particular, that of Eastern Europe, whose membership in the past few years has doubled in number, are adequately represented. The same care should be given to ensuring the adequate representation of developing countries.

This question shows that further discussions and negotiations concerning the expansion of non-permanent membership of the Security Council will have to take care of certain aspects of the wider problem of expansion which were less visible at earlier stages.

The main question, however, remains whether the expansion of the size of the Security Council should take place only in the category of non-permanent seats or should encompass both permanent and non-permanent seats. While the opinions on this question remain divided, it is important to note that innovative approaches have been suggested and are mentioned in paragraph 27 of the report before us. We support the proposal for two regional permanent seats for Africa proposed in the African common position, and we noted that in his statement yesterday, the Permanent Representative of Kenya emphasized the importance of that proposal. We think that this proposal should be given particularly careful attention at a subsequent stage of the work on the reform of the Security Council. We also believe that other proposals of this kind should be studied with a view to ascertaining to what extent the concept of regional rotation can meet the needs of different regions.

In this context, I wish to refer to a point made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Germany,

who mentioned in his statement that several States expressed support both for the creation of new permanent seats and also for the Italian proposal. He then said that this could be understood as a desire to combine the principles of permanent regional representation and rotation, leading to permanent regional seats as a possible solution to the problem of selecting permanent members from the three regions concerned.

I think that this point is very interesting. It contains an approach that certainly needs to be discussed further. It suggests a certain convergence of the different approaches mentioned so far in the Working Group, and I believe that the Working Group should give it due attention during the next stage of its work.

Another — and perhaps the most important — aspect of the question of expansion of the category of permanent members of the Security Council relates to the veto, which, in addition to permanence, is the main factor characterizing the status of permanent members.

We note with regret that the Working Group did not make much progress with respect to the veto. As mentioned in paragraph 31 of the report, in the course of discussions many proposals were made with respect to limitations on the veto, and were widely supported. Given the importance and the inherent complexity of the subject, it is natural that opposition was expressed. However, it is worrying that the opposition expressed did not allow for any further discussion. That opposition was very clear and blunt, and did not indicate any readiness for negotiation. This is disturbing because the whole question of the nature and quality of the reform of the Security Council hinges on the issue of the veto. We therefore appeal to all to give particular attention to the question of the veto at the subsequent stage of work and to explore the possibilities of limiting its scope and use in a reformed Security Council.

In this context, we wish to draw attention to the last sentence in paragraph 31 of the report, which refers to an important concept: non-discrimination. We believe that the meaning of this concept, as it might relate to various models of expansion of the permanent membership, must be fully explored. In our view, all the permanent members of a reformed Security Council should have equal status. To make this possible, the scope and use of the veto ought to be limited for all permanent members. Some specific proposals as to how that could be done have already been made in the Working Group. Others may follow. They should all be given careful consideration and the advantage of a more genuine dialogue than has been the case so far.

In conclusion, I should like to express once again our appreciation for the work done so far by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. We greatly appreciate the work done by the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, who was also Chairman of the Working Group. We are convinced that your own role, Mr. President, in the subsequent stage of the work of the working Group will be extremely important. A great deal of time has been spent on this issue, and we hope that in 1997 the work of the Working Group will be successfully concluded.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): The report to the General Assembly of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council contains a full account of the discussions that have taken place since the beginning of the year. The annex that accompanies the report gives an indication of the richness and depth of the ideas and proposals presented by many delegations to the Working Group. I pay tribute to the Vice-Chairmen, who have so patiently and skilfully steered our work. We look forward to the energy and authority that you, Mr. President, will bring to the Working Group in support of their efforts.

The position of my delegation on the principal issues of substance has not changed since I addressed the General Assembly on this agenda item almost a year ago. I stated then that, on the basis of certain fundamental points of principle, we would take a flexible attitude to various aspects of the issues as they evolve, giving full consideration to the views of other Members. We continue to support enlargement of the permanent and non-permanent categories to enhance the effectiveness of the Council and provide more equitable geographic representation. In addition to supporting seats for Germany and Japan — countries which many, including ourselves, see as appropriate candidates for permanent seats in terms of the outreach of their economic and political status — we support new permanent seats for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. From the outset we have stated our view that curtailment of the veto — an issue on which the Permanent Representative of Slovenia has just spoken with much authority — and periodic review should be intrinsic elements of any overall solution.

We have also supported the proposals put forward, and in some cases already endorsed by the Security Council, to improve the working methods and transparency of the work of the Council. In this regard,

we have found the proposal by the Czech Republic for a new interpretation of Article 31 to be particularly constructive and worthy of serious consideration by the Council. These are not secondary reforms. Together with enlargement of the Council, they will greatly strengthen understanding of and confidence in the Council's authority through a greater openness in the Security Council's relationship with the general membership.

Participation in the debate last year and careful study of the proposals contained in the annex to the report of the Working Group have given me the impression that our approach, which we put forward together with a number of like-minded countries, is shared by a reasonably large number of delegations. However, as we all know, on a number of fundamental issues there is as yet no consensus — to put it no more strongly than that.

When the Working Group next meets to plan its programme of work for the fifty-first session, it will be faced with an important choice: whether to proceed as before with a series of scripted exchanges on the principal issues of Security Council reform, all of which are listed in considerable detail in the annex to the report before us, or whether to accept that, unless we inject a new sense of urgency into the work of this Working Group, and perhaps into the reform process in general, the process is in danger of running out of steam.

If the Working Group takes the first course, without being more precise about its objectives, a year from now we may have a report that is little altered from the one before us today. If, however, we concede that new momentum is required, we will have to address seriously the ways in which work should develop next year to best effect. We would need to identify ways of narrowing the differences that now separate us. This would mean moving from argument, analysis and debate towards a plane on which the first stages of negotiation might commence.

It is probably realistic to surmise that progress on the issues under consideration in the Working Group will be influenced by wider factors that can encourage solutions or otherwise. Having said that, however, I should say that conditionality is not on our agenda, and we should explore every avenue in the Working Group to get the maximum results achievable in the common interest.

To give fresh impetus to the next stage of our work, we should make use of all the established instruments of United Nations practice that are available to us. In addition to formal sessions of the Working Group, these would include open-ended informal consultations and perhaps some brainstorming sessions on certain of the more complex issues. We believe that we should be flexible about informal efforts to bring views closer together as long as overall transparency in our work is respected so as to maintain confidence in the process.

It seemed clear to us from the Group's discussion at the last session that papers or non-papers from the Chair can be particularly helpful in focusing discussion and avoiding directionless debate. We recognize that this is not an easy task and that it is only feasible if confidence and cooperation are forthcoming from all delegations. But if there were a greater readiness to use this approach, the potential for progress would be widened in our view.

My delegation will encourage working methods to move things forward with general support. We look forward to participating actively in the work of the Group during the fifty-first session and hope that we can make decisive progress in reaching solutions to the issues which we have now been addressing for over three years.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea has, with keen interest, been actively engaged in the important deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and is pleased to join today's debate on agenda item 47.

The modernization of the Security Council is a critical issue of our time and a challenge to which the international community must rise. The ability of the United Nations to formulate a credible peace and security agenda for the next century will depend greatly upon our accomplishments in that undertaking. Therefore, this daunting task must be addressed earnestly and with prudence. Throughout the reform process, the Republic of Korea has maintained a consistent position and one that we should like to reaffirm on this occasion.

First and foremost, we support the expansion of the Security Council. That is clearly warranted in the light of the dramatically changed character of international relations as well as the substantial increase in United Nations membership over the past decades. If the Security Council is to become more legitimate, credible and effective as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, it must be more representative of today's world.

Second, we have stressed that in enlarging the Security Council, particular caution should be exercised against taking any decision that would empower a select few Member States by giving them a privileged and irreversible status. We believe that such a move would run counter to the trend of democratization and further undermine the adaptability of the Organization to the continually evolving international environment.

The notions of "permanency" and "the veto" have become rather outdated. Despite the reality of the current permanent members, we are not yet convinced by the argument that without an increase in permanent membership, Security Council reform would be neither balanced nor complete. This cannot be reconciled with the new era of democratization, global cooperation and interdependence.

Third, we support the expansion of the non-permanent membership. We are pleased to note that this year's report of the Open-ended Working Group documents the position of a large number of Member States, and states that:

> "The proposal that, in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category received wide support." (*A/50/47, para. 29*)

As to a concrete modality for enlargement of the non-permanent category, we are open to a variety of proposals, including the simple addition of several non-permanent members or schemes providing more frequent rotation. We believe that the Working Group must concentrate on working out a modality for non-permanent expansion that would be acceptable to the general membership, rather than focusing on a highly divisive and controversial issue, namely, whether or not permanent members should be added. In this connection, I agree with the views of the Italian Ambassador that we stand at the crossroads, leading either to new permanent seats or to new elected seats, and I emphasize, elected seats.

As regards the question of new elected seats, we do not confine our thinking to the current two-year term for non-permanent members. For instance, we might consider the addition of several new non-permanent members, perhaps as many as eight, with tenures longer than two years, such as a four-year term, which would be elected in exactly the same manner as the current non-permanent members. The equal eligibility of all Member States for that new opportunity could circumvent the strong conceptual objections that any creation of a preselected and privileged group of countries would incur. This can also enhance the overall representativity and credibility of the Security Council.

Fourth, with regard to the current decision-making process of the Security Council, we believe that an overhaul of the veto system is in order. While we recognize the growing trend away from exercise of the veto since the collapse of the cold war, many delegations expressed the opinion during the Working Group's discussions that any Security Council reform package must include the improvement of that undemocratic system. To that end, we support the idea of circumscribing the scope of the veto power to Security Council actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter, as has been endorsed by so many countries, including the Non-Aligned Movement. In this connection, we take note of the Brazilian Ambassador's interesting proposal to allow permanent members to cast a "no" vote without vetoing.

Another important and closely related veto issue is whether it will be extended beyond the current permanent members. It seems entirely illogical and rather self-defeating to allow the proliferation of veto holders while at the same time trying to minimize the overuse or abuse of the veto. We firmly believe that the privileged group of veto holders, endorsed 50 years ago as a special exception to the principle of sovereign equality, must not be enlarged.

And fifth, we support the further improvement of the Security Council's working methods with a view to enhancing transparency and ensuring greater interaction between non-members and members of the Council, while not sacrificing its operational efficiency. In this context, we welcome the important progress made to that effect in recent years, such as regular briefings by the President of the Security Council to the general membership, more frequent orientation debates, and consultations with troop-contributing countries. These positive initiatives should be consolidated and developed further.

The foregoing views are of particular importance to my delegation and will continue to be our guiding principles in the common pursuit of Security Council reform. We sincerely hope these views can evolve and develop by virtue of constructive and enlightening input from other delegations.

It is understandable that each delegation will have a different opinion as to where exactly we stand on the question of Security Council reform, and just what progress was achieved by the Working Group during the Assembly's last session. Some see none at all, while others observe something tangible. For our part, we recognize at least two significant developments on the issue of enlargement.

One is that the so-called "quick-fix" solution has been declared off the table. This year's report of the Open-ended Working Group states:

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable." (*A/50/47, para. 26*)

Given this convergence of opinion, we may now be left primarily with two options: either to increase the non-permanent category only in its broader sense; or to expand permanent membership to include the developing world along with additional non-permanent members.

Three years of experience in the Working Group tells us that the former option is less divisive in nature and would be easier to bring about and that the latter would be extremely difficult to realize in the light of the complexities surrounding the selection of new permanent members. The idea of permanent regional representation or permanent regional rotating seats was floated and discussed during the past session of the Working Group as a way of bringing the developing world into permanent membership. However, it allows only — and I emphasize the word "only" — the industrialized nations to join permanent membership in the traditional sense, leaving the developing world in a state of great uncertainty.

Moreover, given the complex regional dynamics of the developing world, I wonder how such a formula could work. I note that several delegations have already expressed, rather convincingly, conceptual objections to this apparent oxymoron. It was interesting to hear from the Mexican Ambassador that non-permanent members have already been elected to seats "permanently" assigned to each region.

Another development is that even those who support an increase in permanent membership accept the proposition that the word "permanent" should not imply "eternal", a point made continually by delegations with strong reservations on that increase. We note with interest that Germany, a nation widely regarded as a potential direct beneficiary of an increase in permanent membership, put forward the idea that new permanent members should not be eternal but subject to periodic review with a 15-year interval in the form of a General Assembly vote.

Although its proposal as a whole may not enjoy broad support, it echoes my delegation's repeated advocacy that the qualifications of Security Council members must be checked against time and that democratic review in the form of elections is essential. Furthermore, the combination of "permanent" and "periodic review" might be seen as having something in common with the mix of "non-permanent" and "longer tenure". We take some encouragement from the fact that the conceptual gap is not necessarily unbridgeable. If common ground exists, it would be worthwhile to explore and pursue it. In our view, longer term non-permanent membership is worthy of further consideration.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to contributing to the deliberations on this important issue under your able leadership, Sir. We also wish to assure you and all other colleagues here today that my delegation is ready to work together on any new constructive initiatives or proposals which may lead us to a consensus on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey stated at the general debate almost a month ago that, as we embark on the second half-century of our Organization, it is appropriate for the international community to reassess the ways and means by which we can give new impetus to the efforts aimed at building a better and more secure future for all humankind.

The challenges that the United Nations will face in the twenty-first century will probably be greater than ever before. Hence, the United Nations has to adapt itself without delay to changing times and circumstances. It is on this premise that we support the ongoing reform process within the United Nations. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the occasion of United Nations Day on 24 October, aptly stated that:

> "Let us remember that the United Nations founded in 1945 was an unfinished edifice. ...
>
> "The United Nations is a work in progress. Just as our predecessors strove to give us a world organization capable of dealing with the challenges

of the age, so our task is to prepare the United Nations of the twenty-first century." (SGSM/6094)

In this respect, streamlining, rationalizing, revitalizing and restructuring the United Nations system and its work are the widely accepted components needed to bring about a more effective, responsive, representative, democratic and accountable world Organization. These modifications, which are currently under intense consideration, will determine the effectiveness and, indeed, the validity and continued relevance of the United Nations in the years ahead.

The central issue before us is the enhancement of the representative character of the Security Council. The new international political environment requires the democratization of the Council. Since January 1994, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council has been formulating a set of guidelines for the ongoing reform process.

Two main aspects of our work require equal attention. We have to enhance the representative character of the Council and democratize its method of work.

Mr. Nsanze (Burundi), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On the first point, the enhancement of the representative nature of the Council cannot be confined merely to a quantitative expansion of its size. The modalities of the enlargement should also be elaborated. We do not think that an increase in the overall number of seats alone will suffice to ensure more equitable and representative participation in the work of the Council. The enlargement should be coupled with a fair system of workable rotation. In this context, we believe that the revised proposal for the enlargement of the Security Council submitted by Italy on 12 June 1996, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex IX, and our position paper of 15 September 1995, which is contained in document A/49/965, annex V, merit careful consideration.

Turkey strongly favours a genuine and comprehensive reform. Since the establishment of the Working Group by General Assembly resolution 48/26, we have participated actively in every stage of this process. Turkey is against continuation of the status quo. We have to be mindful of the fact that this unique organ has to be able to evolve so that it will efficiently face the uncertainties and challenges that lie ahead.

The recent report of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council (A/50/47) lays out the facts. Proposals for an increase in the non-permanent membership only, including proposals on more frequent elections for a number of Member States, as proposed by Italy, Mexico and Turkey in annex V of document A/49/965, received both support and objections. The proposal by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that, in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category received wide support. In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable. The concept of regional rotation of permanent seats received both support and objections.

Consequently, it seems to our delegation that an increase in non-permanent seats would seem to be the most natural course of action. Turkey believes that the Working Group should concentrate its efforts on the points that received the widest support.

The proposal introduced by Spain on 4 June 1996 with regard to the criteria for the non-permanent rotational seats, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex VIII, deserves careful consideration.

We agree that the contribution of military, police and civilian personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations should be the first criterion; the next criterion could be the financial contributions disbursed to the Organization's budget; and the third criterion should be the population of Member States. We believe that these criteria, with the flexibility to update them, will address the needs, expectations and changing conditions of the international community.

The improvement of the working methods of the Security Council is an equally important aspect of the reform process. In this respect, the aim should be to make the Council transparent, responsive, inclusive and accountable. The aspects which we would like to see the Security Council adopt are included in the working paper submitted by Argentina and New Zealand on 17 May 1996, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex VI.

In this context, we would like to reiterate the importance of transparency. To this end, it should not

only be a regular practice, but a requirement, for the Security Council to hold consultations with interested parties before decisions are made, especially decisions that affect them directly.

The issue of the reform of the Security Council no doubt requires comprehensive and cautious analysis. Reform in the financial area, which is being taken up separately, is itself important. However, it would be unrealistic to assume that financial reform alone would be sufficient to make the United Nations better equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. In this context, I would like to emphasize that with only short-term goals in mind, progress and success will be at risk. At this point in time, when we embark upon the vitally important path of reforming the Security Council, we have to move carefully but resolutely.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): My statement will be very brief. Its sole objective is to express France's continued interest in the work begun three years ago on the expansion of the Security Council. This important endeavour, upon which we embarked in 1993 in the awareness that it would entail difficult negotiations, must be brought to a successful conclusion. Not to succeed, or not to do so within a reasonable time limit, would be a blow to multilateralism. We must — and indeed we want — to achieve reform in order to enable the organs established by the Charter of the United Nations to live up to their full potential.

Resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 laid the framework for efforts to expand the Council, and it continues to provide the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We need both to draw the necessary conclusions from the increase in the membership of the United Nations, particularly among the developing countries, and to take into account the other factors that have affected the evolution of international relations.

We must draw a clear conclusion from this mandate: the number of members of the Security Council must be increased, but in a way that will not prevent it from responding swiftly to crisis situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. For that reason we feel that a few more than 20 members should be the maximum. The increase should be designed to ensure better representation of developing countries in the Council. In our view, this presence of the developing countries should be reflected in both categories of Council members: the non-permanent and the permanent members. The general debate has shown that this idea enjoys very broad support.

Furthermore, we can all see that certain States today have an international influence which should be exercised in a more sustained and official way in the United Nations. This is the case with Germany and Japan, which have our full support on this point, as well as the support of many other States. France also believes that the large States of the South should have an appropriate place. Finally, we readily acknowledge that no geographical group should be excluded from the expansion effort. All groups of countries whose numbers have increased are justified in demanding not to be left out.

With regard to the working methods of the Security Council, many steps have been taken over the last three years to make them both more rational and more transparent. We think that we should stick to the pragmatic approach followed so far, which has yielded good results, even though they can certainly be taken further and consolidated. We have managed to avoid the pitfall of seeking to freeze the status quo; let us continue on this path.

During the general debate in the Assembly at this session, we noted that many speakers expressed the hope that there would be no excessive delay in taking the decisions necessary to complete the reform process in the United Nations. Everyone knows that the question of the Security Council's composition is a central element in the reform process. Agreement on increasing the Council's membership is therefore an indispensable component of any true reform.

The initial positions of each of us are now well known, and their repetition would serve no useful purpose. We must therefore set ourselves the goal of concluding negotiations within a reasonably brief time-frame. France, for its part, is prepared to contribute to that process.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): I would like to begin by commending the Chairman and the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to Security Council reform for their tireless efforts during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. They have my delegation's full support as they continue to steer the Working Group in the discharge of its mandate.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made by the delegation of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Movement has made concrete proposals on all aspects of the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, which we hope will be a positive contribution to the building of consensus on this vital issue.

We welcome the report of the Working Group, which reflects accurately the debate that took place in the Working Group during the past Assembly session. The international community had hoped that the Working Group would have ridden on the wave of the jubilee of the Organization to arrive at an acceptable formula for reform and expansion. We are all aware that this did not happen, and the process is taking too long to yield even the first fruits. In our view, however, the Working Group has to continue until a solution is found to make the Security Council transparent, democratic and accountable to the wider membership of the Organization. The imbalance in the Council has therefore to be redressed.

Only a month ago, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe addressed the fifty-first session of the General Assembly and reiterated the urgent need to ensure that developing countries are adequately represented in the permanent category. The Minister stated:

> "We in Africa maintain that the present arrangement where Africa and Latin America have no permanent representatives on the Security Council, while Asia has only one, is unjust and antidemocratic and must not be allowed to continue. Those three regions should each have at least two permanent seats, with incumbents enjoying the same rights and privileges as the present permanent members. Additional non-permanent seats should also be allocated to each of those regions so as to ensure equitable geographical representation proportionate to the numerical strength of each region in this Organization." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 10th meeting, p. 17)*

As is evident from that quotation, Zimbabwe is committed to the common African position, as clearly stated by the Organization of African Unity. It is inconceivable that, in an era when the virtues of democracy and good governance at the national level are being preached, such democracy is not applied at the level of the United Nations and that an entire continent of 54 Member States is not represented in the Security Council in the permanent category. A Council where all regions are equitably represented will, no doubt, not only enhance the credibility and legitimacy of one of the principal organs of the United Nations, but also enhance the credibility of those who champion the ideals of democracy in human relations.

The Security Council, as at present constituted, empowers only a few Members of the world body, who were accorded this privileged status presumably by virtue of their victory during a war fought half a century ago. In that war, the peoples of the African continent made enormous contributions to the eventual defeat of fascism and Nazism. Yet today it is the handful of permanent members of the Security Council who continue to wield powers that enable them to take or block decisions that affect the destiny of the vast majority of Member States of the Organization. It is our contention that the Security Council, in the post-cold-war era, should not continue to be used as an instrument to serve the interests of a very few powerful countries. It is also our contention that in order to enhance the credibility and universal character of the United Nations, the visibility and vital role of the General Assembly, as the highest decision-making body of the Organization, have to be highlighted and reinforced.

The Non-Aligned Movement presented a position paper on the veto that was supported by an overwhelming number of delegations. The veto is a relic of the cold war. The Non-Aligned Movement's proposal is clear. The scope of the veto has to be curtailed and restricted to only those matters that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter. Eventually, the veto has to be abolished altogether. It is clear from the discussions that took place in the Working Group on this subject that the permanent five are reluctant to discuss this subject seriously. Their intransigent posture, if it persists, will be an obstacle to the reform process. We therefore appeal to them to review their position on this vital issue.

When negotiations on the reform and expansion of the Security Council commenced three years ago, we were told that the reform of the Council's working methods would constitute the so-called early harvest. However, the posture assumed by some Council members in recent days has blighted the prospect for such an early harvest. We applaud President Razali in his efforts to ensure that there is transparency and accountability in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. We note, however, that some members of the Council were reluctant to see consultations being carried out between the presidents of the General

Assembly and the Security Council. We are convinced that genuine consultations between the Council and the rest of the membership will go a long way towards enhancing its decision-making capability as well as its moral credibility. We are told that the Council is in the process of gradually reforming itself, and also that it is the master of its own procedures. Yet with increasing cogency the question is being asked whether the much-vaunted reforms are not just cosmetic. Should the pace and content of change be left entirely to the five permanent members, to the exclusion of the rest of the 185 Member States of the Organization?

In this regard, my delegation would like to support the Non-Aligned Movement proposal to finalize the provisional rules of procedure — a step that will certainly grant legal weight to the decisions taken by the Council. In calling for the formalization of these measures, we are not advocating that this be done at the expense of other equally important aspects of the reform exercise, such as the expansion. We believe that progress on both fronts can and should be achieved simultaneously, as a package. The current debate should provide a legal and binding framework for the collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly, with ultimate authority vested in the General Assembly, as is stated in the Charter.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first to mention that my delegation looks forward to working with President Razali in his capacity as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We are also grateful for the efforts this year of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand. The General Assembly debate on the report of the Working Group allows us the opportunity to review the results of our discussions this past year and to consider how to approach our mandate when we resume our efforts in January.

With regard to the working methods of the Council, the report underlines the considerable time and effort we have devoted to this subject. Delegations participated actively and a number of useful ideas were proposed, which shows the importance most of us attach to reform in this area. That reconfirms the need to ensure that this vitally important body grows and evolves in step with the expansion of the global membership of our Organization and in a manner that is consistent with the challenges we face on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

We welcome the further efforts made this year to improve the transparency, legitimacy, and effectiveness of the Council's activities. As a troop-contributing country, we are particularly pleased with the enhancement of the Council's mechanism for consultations with the countries involved. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, stated during the general debate this year, Canada attaches particular importance to the need to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making by those members whose nationals — military and civilian — are in the crossfire of the conflicts over which the Council is deliberating.

Those developments are reflected in the Presidential Statement issued on 28 March by the Council. Among its most significant elements, the Statement requires the President of the Council to chair meetings with troop-contributing nations and the Council is requested to consult with prospective troop-contributing nations before new operations are mounted. These changes should ensure more direct and timely exchanges of views on vitally important issues of mandate, mission objectives and the adequacy of planned resources in advance of the adoption or extension of peacekeeping mandates.

Thanks to the enhanced deliberations of the Security Council, both the Council members and the troop-contributing nations are now responsible for ensuring that the improvements introduced are used effectively and to their fullest potential.

As the report and its annexes illustrate, there has been some progress in other areas, most notably the more frequent use of formal orientation debates, regular briefings for Member States on the activities of the Council presidency and changes making the activities of the Council's sanctions committees more transparent. These, too, are welcome innovations, as they have made the Security Council more responsive to the concerns of the broader United Nations membership.

However, we can and should do more. Our discussions this year have underlined the fact that the majority of Member States strongly support further improvements in the Council's working methods and the formalization of those changes already made. One area that merits closer attention is the participation in the work of the Council of non-Member States. In particular, those most directly involved in or affected by an issue before the Council should be able to participate in the Council's deliberations on that issue. That is the intent behind Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, both of which need to

be implemented more effectively. A number of useful ideas on how to do this, including a proposal from the Czech delegation, have been put forward.

In particular, we need a better understanding of how to act on the words in Article 31; according to which:

> "Any Member ... may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected."

There are two points to make here. First, in our view it should be understood that participation would be virtually automatic when a Member is involved in a matter before the Council, either as a directly affected party or as a major troop-contributing country, especially the lead contributors. Secondly, "participation" should be understood to mean involvement in the informal discussions, including on draft texts, not just being graciously allowed to make a public speech in the Council Chamber.

Some have expressed reservations to the effect that further reform, especially in this area, would diminish the Council's decision-making capacity. However, we reject any attempt to preserve and protect the exclusivity of the Council, particularly that of its permanent members. Indeed, we believe that, on the contrary, greater consultation in these areas would allow the Council to take more informed and more appropriate action. Moreover, such changes would, we contend, only improve the Council's decisions and increase its credibility.

(spoke in English)

Concerning decision-making, the focus of the Working Group's attention has been, of course, tightly focused on the question of the veto. We share the view expressed by the majority of delegations opposing any extension of the veto and supporting an urgent examination of how to limit the current veto power and better define its scope. In particular, we believe the current veto ought to be restricted to Security Council decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter. This needs to be considered further in the Working Group. To this end, we believe that the papers presented by Mexico and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned this year provide a good basis for further discussion.

The message from most delegations over the past year has said very clearly that extending the veto privilege is decidedly not the best way to deal with the very many concerns already expressed about this issue. Any extension would exacerbate current problems, make decision-making more difficult, potentially exclude more conflicts from the purview of the Council and, once granted, would of course be difficult to review. In short, it would neither improve the functioning of the Council nor enhance its representative nature. Extending veto privileges would almost certainly militate against the effectiveness of the Council in its efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Concerning the primordial matter of the size and composition of the Security Council, there is clear agreement in the Working Group that any formula should be agreed by all. This principle has been the foundation on which we have built all our efforts to date and, we contend, cannot be compromised. Like others, we believe that any expansion should be aimed at recognizing better the contribution of Member States to the broader purposes of the Charter while also reflecting the increase in the membership of the Organization. However, three years of discussion have failed to produce anything close to a consensus on how to do this.

The main obstacle has been the question of the addition of new permanent members. The Working Group has agonized over this from the outset. An enormous amount of time and energy has been devoted to considering ways in which this might be done in a manner acceptable to all. Proposals have been made and put aside. However, despite exhaustive discussions, the subject appears to have become more difficult rather than less.

As the report makes plain, there is, first and foremost, nothing approaching a consensus on whether any expansion in permanent membership is either warranted or acceptable. Similarly, there is no indication that these divergences can be bridged. Even among those who do support the addition of new permanent members, there are differences as to how this should be done. The "quick fix" solution — the simple addition of two permanent members — has not attracted the support it needs to be a realistic option. Other formulas have been put forward in an effort to square the circle, but these have proved similarly problematic and are unlikely, in our assessment, to receive widespread support. One option that received considerable attention this year is the idea of regional rotating permanent members. Variations were proposed, including one that would mix regular with rotating permanent seats. We have strong reservations about all of these proposals. While various formulas

espousing the theme of rotating permanent members would certainly enhance the status of a very select group of Member States, it remains entirely uncertain how these formulas would work and, even less, how they would benefit the large majority of Member States.

The idea of how countries and which countries would be selected for this new category of membership has also defied clarification; indeed, a degree of confusion, creative or otherwise, seems to hover over this question. We are concerned that different suggestions in this regard do not accommodate the vital requirements that all Members of the United Nations participate equally and transparently in the election of all members of the Council.

Most fundamentally, we share the strong concerns expressed by others that these formulas might restrict rather than enhance access to the Council by the majority of the United Nations membership. We fully appreciate the motivations of those countries that have developed these proposals. In our view however, they are simply not the way to achieve a more representative Council.

We have indicated before that the aspirations of several countries to permanent member status is understandable. Nevertheless, it seems difficult not to conclude from our extensive discussions on this issue that the addition of new permanent members — of whatever kind — faces hurdles that, at this time, we simply cannot overcome. The deadlock on this subject is impeding our ability to decide on an expanded Council membership that will respond to the needs of all Member States. It is in effect blocking the reform that we have all agreed is needed to enable the Security Council better to reflect changing times and challenges.

In these circumstances, we wonder whether it might not be easier to obtain agreement, for the present, on expanding the Security Council in the non-permanent category. Agreement here ought to be easier to obtain. This would be a first step that would not by any means preclude future discussion on permanent membership.

As the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, noted before the General Assembly a month ago, any expansion needs to better reflect the contribution of members to the broader purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as the need for equitable geographic representation. An expansion in the non-permanent category would therefore require enhanced participation from all geographic regions. Such an expansion would also need to be relatively modest, perhaps 6 to 10 members, to enhance the effective functioning of the Council.

To this end, as we have indicated before, we see considerable merit in proposals that would expand the Council to allow for more frequent rotation by countries which more fully meet the primary requirements of Article 23, dealing with the composition of the Council. This is worth doing for its own sake, to better reflect the intention of the United Nations Charter. Equally important, however, it would reduce the number of candidates and the strength of competition for existing non-permanent seats. It would thereby help to ensure that more countries had an opportunity to serve on the Council than is now the case.

This, of course, remains but one possibility. We remain open to other formulas that would move us forward in the search for a solution likely to attract widespread support. For instance, the possibility of a straightforward expansion of the Council, in the non-permanent category only, for all geographic regions, just as was done in 1965, has always been an option from the outset of our deliberations. Perhaps after three years of inconclusive debate, we ought to give this option some straightforward consideration as an alternative that meets most countries' objectives.

I can assure the President of the Assembly and the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group of Canada's full and active participation once the work of the Group resumes in January.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The reform of the United Nations is a matter of worldwide concern. At its heart is the reform of the Security Council, which has a decisive impact on the whole reform process of the United Nations. During the last session of the General Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council had further in-depth and fairly detailed discussions on the reform of the Council, which contributed to enhanced mutual understanding by all parties, though no substantive progress was made on major issues. The Chinese delegation deems these discussions useful and hopes that the Working Group will continue to make fruitful efforts at the current session of the General Assembly.

The enlargement of the membership of the Council is at the core of its reform. China is in favour of its appropriate expansion. Since 1963 the United Nations membership has increased by over one third in the wake of the upsurge of national liberation movements and profound changes on the international scene. However, no corresponding change has been made to the composition of the Council over the past 30 years.

What is even more worrisome is that there has long been a serious imbalance in the composition of the Council. Developing countries make up more than two thirds of the United Nations membership. However, this reality is far from adequately reflected by their representation in the Council. This is particularly true for Africa and Latin America, where there is a concentration of developing countries. This imbalance merits our serious attention.

His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of China, pointed out at the Special Commemorative Meeting to mark the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations that the reform of the United Nations should reflect the principle of balanced geographical distribution and strengthen the position and role of third world countries in the United Nations.

As an important component of United Nations reform, the reform of the Council must focus on redressing imbalanced regional representation, particularly the serious inadequacy in the representation of developing countries. It must in no way further aggravate this imbalance. Without attaining this objective, the enlargement of the Council cannot be regarded as reform in a real sense; it would be, rather, a failure to reform. Therefore, no reform plan that excludes or discriminates against developing countries will ever be accepted by the general membership of the United Nations, including China.

I also wish to emphasize here that the Council is not a club of the rich, still less a board of directors. Increasing the membership of the Council cannot and should not depend solely on a country's financial contributions to the United Nations. What is more important is whether it has a correct understanding of war and peace both from a historical and from a current perspective and whether it is a positive factor in promoting international peace and security. That is precisely why the United Nations was created and why the Council is entrusted with the major responsibility of maintaining international peace and security to free mankind from the scourge of any future war and aggression.

We are of the view that the reform of the Council is by no means simply a matter of increasing the number of members. It is, in the final analysis, aimed at making the Council a true representative of the interests of all countries in the world, one that enjoys their trust and support, thus better reflecting the purposes and principles of the Charter. This bears on whether the Council can better fulfil its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and enhance the authority and representativeness of its decisions.

Another important aspect of the Council's reform is the improvement of its working methods. This is aimed at, first, enhancing its effectiveness so that it can better fulfil its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security entrusted by the Charter, and secondly, increasing the transparency of its work and strengthening the understanding of and participation in its work by the general membership to show that it truly acts on behalf of Member States. At present the Council has already adopted a few measures to improve its working methods. However, some of them are yet to be implemented and further improvements are necessary.

I wish particularly to nt out in this connection that the Council's procedure for imposing and removing sanctions is far from perfect. This has made it possible for one or two countries, bent on having their own way, to brandish the big stick of sanctions against developing countries in disregard of the will of the general membership and of the suffering of the peoples of target countries. The Council has already had quite a few lessons in this regard. We must take practical measures to redress this situation.

China has always supported and vigorously promoted improvement of the Council's working methods and stands for strengthening the Council's relations with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, the convening of as many open meetings as possible, the improvement of practices regarding consultations with troop-contributing countries, and the institution of appropriate arrangements for the parties concerned to state their views directly to the Council. China is ready to join the rest of the membership for further useful discussions on improving the working methods of the Council.

Reform of the Council involves the individual interests of all parties. The results will also produce a tremendous impact on various aspects of the United Nations. Given its complexity and arduousness, reform cannot be expected to be completed overnight. Moreover,

the Council's composition, working methods and decision-making procedures came about against a specific historical background. We must therefore keep pace with the times while maintaining a historical perspective in discussing plans to reform the Council.

China hopes that the general membership will conduct full and patient discussions and consultations on various reform plans and recommendations in a spirit of fairness, openness, transparency and broad consideration. All decisions should reflect to the maximum the requests of the general membership and should be made on the basis of consensus to the extent possible. Only in this way can further imbalance be avoided and the true objective of Council reform be attained.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): I join others in extending our delegation's gratitude for the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the fiftieth session of the Assembly. We also express our appreciation to the co-Vice-Chairmen for their efficiency in guiding the Working Group, and to the Secretariat staff for their support.

Our discussions on this issue over the past three years have revealed broad agreement on the need to expand the Security Council and to improve its working methods by making it more transparent without eroding its efficiency. We have noted with satisfaction the measures adopted so far by the Security Council to infuse some transparency into its working methods and decision-making processes since the Working Group started its work. In particular, we recognize, the increase in consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries, and the scheduling of formal meetings which non-members are encouraged to attend and where they can make presentations if they so desire. Equally noteworthy are the periodic consultative meetings between the President of the Council and the President of the General Assembly. The institutionalization of these measures has been called for by several delegations, including mine, and we hope the Security Council will initiate steps in this direction. It is also imperative that the opinions and views of non-members of the Council, expressed through these consultations, are taken into consideration in the Council's deliberations and decision-making. In general, enhanced coordination and synergy between the Security Council and the General Assembly are absolutely necessary to ensure a proper balance between those two bodies, as envisaged under the Charter.

As we have stated on previous occasions, any restructuring of the Security Council must take into full account the current geographical configuration of the general membership of the United Nations. This is the only way to ensure equity, accountability, representativity and credibility. And this is especially so when small countries are now increasingly called upon to bear a disproportionate burden for the maintenance of international peace and security, through the provision of troops and payment of assessed contributions for various United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Regarding the issue of expansion, Ghana subscribes to the position of the African Group, which calls for at least two permanent seats and a proportionate number of non-permanent seats for our continent. On the question of the veto, the delegation of Ghana is of the view that although there might have been good reasons for the veto power when the Charter was drawn up, it is anachronistic in its present form and must be modified and limited to clearly defined situations within the context of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Our delegation suggests that consideration should be given to a review of the number of negative votes that can constitute a veto in the Council, and that additionally a formula should be worked out under which a Council veto can be overridden by a certain number of votes in the General Assembly. But whatever decision is arrived at on the scope and parameters of the veto, it must be extended to any new permanent members of the Council in order to conform to the principles of equity and sovereign equality which are the bedrock of the Charter of the Organization.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has now been under general discussion for over three years now. We feel that the time has come for serious negotiations to commence with a view to arriving at a consensus within a specified time-frame. Of course, we recognize the complex nature of the subject, but we are ready to join in any creative efforts towards working out a meaningful compromise that would respond to our common objectives.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Today's discussion confirms, if confirmation were needed, that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains the central issue among all the problems relating to the reorganization of the United

Nations. This subject has not only a definite political dimension but a tangible moral and psychological one as well. The membership of the Security Council should adequately reflect the vast changes in the world as well as the impressive increase in the number of United Nations Member States in recent decades. There is already a consensus on this in the Organization.

We believe that modest but tangible progress resulted from the thorough consideration of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council that took place in the Open-ended Working Group during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This is reflected in the generally high-quality and balanced report of the Group, which neither glosses over nor dramatizes the remaining substantial divergence of views.

Some States are obviously striving to find specific solutions in the near future. Existing differences of opinion, however, cannot be overcome by prodding the discussion or by artificially rushing the inevitably complex search for consensus. More time is needed. Not all delegations are happy with this, but there is no other solution.

The Working Group's report confirms that a number of States are not prepared to adopt final positions because of linkages between the size and composition of the Security Council and other matters within the mandate of the Working Group. This reminds us once again that any progress towards resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council can be achieved only on the basis of realism and a readiness to compromise.

The present format for considering this issue in the Working group is, in our view, the best one. It provides a flexible framework for reaching consensus and, at the same time, maintains the informal nature of the discussion, which is useful at this stage. We are convinced that attempts to formalize the discussion or to squeeze it into an arbitrary negotiating format, which inevitably distances us from the consensual foundation of the Working Group, are counter-productive.

Progress towards resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council depends on the efforts of all interested States, whatever their size or their status in the United Nations system. There should be no division between those who lead and those who are led. The assumption that any party should bear particular responsibility for slow progress is, in our view, incorrect.

Our delegation notes with satisfaction that the Working Group has increasingly been steering its activities towards achievable goals. Extreme and unilinear scenarios for modifying the membership of the Security Council have been gradually receding in the course of this process. This trend was reflected in the Group's report, particularly with regard to rejecting the so-called quick fix option, which essentially implies the granting of permanent residence permits in the Security Council to two developed countries only.

The other important sign that realism is gaining ground is a clear reference in the report of the Group to the fact that efforts relating to increasing the membership of the Security Council and enhancing its working methods are closely linked to preserving and strengthening the Council's efficiency. This approach is consistent with the long-standing position of the Russian Federation.

With regard to the Council's decision-making mechanism, we venture to hope that stereotyped viewpoints will be toned down in the discussions within the Working Group. We believe that critics of Security Council activities are sometimes seeking to provide answers to imaginary rather than real questions. We are still convinced that there is no reason to modify the current status of the Security Council's permanent members, in view of the organic interconnection between their rights and their responsibilities.

We believe that an improvement in the representative character of the Security Council should be brought about on a balanced basis, taking into account the interests of all regional groups and bearing in mind, in particular, the need to expand the representation of developing countries.

We venture to hope that the forthcoming round of Working Group activities will be marked by a greater awareness of the need to retain the compact nature of the Security Council, which is so important for maintaining its working capacity. This goal would be met, in our view, by a limited increase in the membership of the Council to the level of some 20 members.

The Group will have to pay serious attention to enhancing the methods and procedures of the Security Council, including achieving greater openness. We are happy that the concrete steps recently taken by the Council members to this end, including those aimed at improving the mechanism of consultations with the

contributors of troops to peacekeeping operations, are now better understood and supported by United Nations Members. Not all find them sufficient, however. Still, these measures were dictated by life itself, and should be consolidated so as to reveal their full potential. Experience gained in the course of their implementation would serve as a basis for decisions regarding possible future steps in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to express the appreciation of the Russian delegation to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland, Mr. Breitenstein, and of Thailand, Mr. Jayanama, for their vigorous and fruitful contribution to efforts to attain our common goals.

Mr. Peleg (Israel): This is the first time that Israel has spoken here on this most important issue of enlarging the Security Council. We have carefully studied the various proposals submitted regarding the issue at hand, and we share the view that as we approach the twenty-first century, the geopolitical situation necessitates making changes in the Council. The issue is complex. It includes the relationship between the permanent and the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the size and composition of the Council, the need for geographical representation and balance, and the significance of the right of veto.

I must note that when Israel addresses the question of Security Council membership or elections to the Council, we do so as the only State Member of this Organization that cannot, even theoretically, be elected to serve on the Council. Unlike each and everyone of the 184 other United Nations Member States, Israel is denied membership in a geopolitical group.

Israel, by virtue of our geographic position, is a part of Asia, and we look forward to the day when we will be accepted into the Asian group by consensus. Unfortunately, this is not the case today, because of some Asian countries which reject our membership in the group.

In the words of the Charter, the United Nations is: "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members" and on universality of membership. Distressingly, under the present circumstances, my country cannot even enjoy the privilege of being disappointed at failing to be elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

Israel believes that this issue should be of interest to the entire international community, for what is at issue here is not merely Israel's exclusion from a geopolitical group, but the more serious matter of a breach of the Charter, upon which this entire Organization is based.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who last year presided over the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and who was particularly dedicated to that work. I should also like to thank the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein and Jayanama, who have presided over the work of the Working Group with great competence and a level of perseverance that won our admiration and support.

The report of the Working Group on the work of its last session shows the richness of the ideas put forward during deliberations on all the subjects under discussion. As a consequence, a consensus emerged on certain non-controversial issues, including the need to expand the Security Council and review its working methods, and to respect the principle of the sovereign equality of Members, and the need for equitable geographical distribution when expanding Council membership.

Egypt supports the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. Egypt's position is an integral part of that of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, and can be summarized very briefly. First, we need to correct the current imbalance in the composition of the Security Council and ensure greater representation on it for non-aligned States. Secondly, we must reconsider the Security Council's relationship with the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the International Court of Justice and regional groups, and with countries that contribute troops for peacekeeping operations. This would ensure greater transparency and legitimacy in the Council's work, and allow us to find an appropriate formula to involve in the Council's work States that are not members, so that they too can participate in decision-making, as stipulated in Article 44 of the Charter.

Thirdly, we must respect the principle of parity and symmetry in the treatment of all items on the agenda of the Working Group, and accord equal importance to questions relating to Security Council enlargement and to

reform. Fourthly, the objective of Security Council reform is to increase the transparency of its work and enhance its effectiveness and the democratic nature of its decisions. Last but not least, we must absolutely ensure that a periodic review is held of all decisions taken in this respect.

Security Council enlargement must not lead to an increase in the number of permanent seats granted to developed States to the detriment of developing countries. We must achieve the balance that has not existed in the past. That must prevail, and that is why we established the Working Group some four years ago. The working paper submitted by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement includes a general framework and expresses the general position of the States of the Movement with regard to the enlargement of the Council.

Our paper also makes it clear that we must correct the imbalance that exists in the Council at present, which is to the detriment of the representation of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to respect the principle of equitable geographic distribution and the sovereign equality of Member States. That is why the Non-Aligned Movement has declared that any predetermined selection of States that is to the detriment of the non-aligned countries or the developing countries would be unacceptable.

Egypt attaches particular importance to the expansion of the Security Council. This is an extremely sensitive issue for us all, and we must not be too quick to adopt truncated or partial solutions. That is why negotiations must continue in good faith and with an open mind so that agreement can be reached on an overall solution that the majority can accept. We do not agree with what have been called quick-fix solutions. We ask all those who are inclined to such quick fix solutions to reconsider their positions.

I should like to refer to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, in which he affirmed the role played by Egypt in African and Asian bodies, in the Non-Aligned Movement, in the Middle East and elsewhere, and referred to Egypt's specific contribution to the United Nations. This role would place Egypt at the forefront of countries ready to shoulder increased responsibilities in a renewed, more balanced Security Council.

In this context, we might consider an appropriate formula that would make it possible to respect equitable criteria for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. Egypt believes that, above all, it is necessary to display the utmost realism and to respect contemporary realities. Some States play an extremely active role, and bear the weight of regional responsibility. Such responsibility varies from one region to another, but it is nonetheless important. We must also respect the principle of sovereign equality so as to give the largest possible number of States an opportunity to be members of the Security Council within a democratic framework. It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that the non-aligned countries represent the numerical majority in contemporary society. The most basic democratic principles demand that we should respect the numerical majority.

Furthermore, we must not neglect another dimension of our contemporary world fraught with complexities: the great majority of crises and problems currently threatening international peace and security are taking place in the territories of non-aligned countries, and most often involve countries of the third world. It is imperative to increase the number of non-aligned members of the Council in order that it may benefit from their vitality and from the contribution they can make towards resolving these disputes and crises. This is a factor that will assuredly enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the Security Council and strengthen its decisions.

In the light of all I have said, Egypt believes that, if we are to implement all of these criteria realistically, we must consider creating new seats for a restricted number of States from each region. Such an arrangement could allow the largest possible number of States to play a role within the Security Council. Egypt has also raised the idea of rotation within each region and, in this context, would like to address the question of the consensus that prevails in the Organization of African Unity on Africa's right to hold two permanent seats on the renewed Security Council.

It should be recognized that there are two major obstacles in the way of expansion. First, there are bound to be negative repercussions on the work of the Security Council because of the increased number of States that might exercise the right of veto. Secondly, it has been difficult to reach agreement on the right of the third world to permanent seats on the Security Council because of the diverse circumstances and situations of individual countries and because of the differences between Asia, Africa and Latin America. That is why I believe that it would be better at the next stage of negotiations for us to reflect on the idea put forward by some States, including Italy, to identify a new method for choosing certain States

that have particular importance in their region and could assume special responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, strictly within a democratic framework. Their increased responsibilities would also reflect the realities of today's world.

As regards the review of the Council's working methods, Egypt would like to refer to the voting system in that organ, which remains temporary because we have not been able to reach agreement on clear criteria for distinguishing between procedural and substantive issues. Fifty years after the creation of the United Nations, the rules of procedure of the Council are still provisional. In this respect, as coordinator of the non-aligned countries and on their behalf, Egypt submitted a document on the question of the increase in the membership of the Security Council, elucidating the Movement's position on the right of veto. This paper affirmed that it is high time for the General Assembly to study the scope of application of the right of veto in a coherent and comprehensive way in order to standardize the procedures and restrict the scope. Nonetheless, day after day, we see new abuses of the right of veto. Suffice it to mention the great media uproar prompted by one permanent member of the Security Council recently in connection with the re-election of the Secretary-General, as though this question involved a threat to international peace and security and the choice of a Secretary-General of the United Nations had suddenly become the cornerstone of international relations and the key to the door to international peace and security.

The Charter contains no provision giving a blank cheque to members of the Council in its recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the re-election of a Secretary-General. Nonetheless, we have seen this phenomenon in the Security Council. In the final analysis, the appointment of a Secretary-General is a prerogative of the General Assembly. It is certainly a curious paradox — one that will go down in the annals of history — that the State now threatening to exercise its right of veto against the re-election of the Secretary-General is the same State that, in 1950, presented a constitutional and legal advisory opinion aimed at strengthening the authority of the General Assembly and asking that the role of the Security Council be disregarded in this respect. How things have changed.

Egypt wishes to stress that it is also absolutely essential to take another look at the way in which decisions are adopted in the Security Council and to broaden the process of consultation with States that are at the centre of certain events under discussion in the Council. I have referred to Article 44 of the Charter, which advocates consultations with Member States, and to Article 50, which says that if a State finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of measures adopted by the Council under Chapter VII, that State shall be consulted. Such consultation has yet to take place, either under Article 44 or Article 50.

Egypt advocates the broadening of consultations with States that are not members of the Council. Regional organizations should also be involved, especially those from regions at the heart of problems under discussion in the Council, and particularly when questions are involved that could lead to the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces.

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that the Working Group has discussed a number of essential ideas without which it would be impossible to continue negotiations in that forum in a positive way. This in itself is promising. I cannot conclude my statement without commending once again the efforts made by the two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand. My delegation pledges to cooperate with them in order to make further progress on these vital issues at the current session.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is of an importance commensurate with the role and vital responsibilities of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. My delegation has followed with great interest the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group at the past three sessions. As is well known, it has not been possible to reach a consensus on the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council or on other matters related to improved working methods, despite the numerous meetings held by the Working Group over the past three years.

Kuwait's interest in the current discussions on increasing the membership of the Security Council arises from its desire to preserve the effectiveness and capacity of that important organ in maintaining international peace and security. That was very apparent in the Security Council's efforts in confronting and dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The effectiveness and speed demonstrated by the Security Council in reaction to the Iraqi aggression and occupation in 1990 through to the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, and its determination to ensure the implementation of all its relevant resolutions, should be preserved and enhanced to serve as a deterrent

to the aggressive violation by States of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter and to threats to international peace and security.

Kuwait shares the interests, concerns and ambitions of other small countries regarding the current discussion on the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council. Small countries should not be the victims of any agreements reached in the Working Group. Any failure to consider the aspirations, ambitions and objectives of small countries could lead to a Security Council lacking balance, democracy and full legitimacy. We therefore hope that the basic principles proposed and confirmed by the Non-Aligned Movement — sovereign equality among all Member States and equitable geographical distribution — will be adhered to.

Kuwait supports an increase in the membership of the Security Council for many reasons. The enormous increase in the membership of the United Nations, international developments and a new world reality that has generated many challenges require United Nations organs, particularly the Security Council, to adapt to those challenges. My delegation believes that any increase in Security Council membership should aim at the following goals and objectives: first, to strengthen and enhance the Security Council, enabling it to assume its enormous responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security; secondly, to reflect in its new composition the current reality of the international community and the General Assembly, which now has a membership of 185 Member States; thirdly, to give added weight to the Security Council's decisions and to strengthen its authority and credibility; fourthly, to implement the principle of equitable geographical representation and to enhance the Council's democratic and representative aspect; and fifthly, to maintain the Council's effectiveness and efficiency and to ensure that an increase in membership does not weaken its actions.

Kuwait believes that there are several countries that have proven, through their relations with the United Nations, that they are capable of assuming the main responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security and of assisting in achieving the United Nations objectives in the political, economic, social and cultural fields through their participation in peacekeeping operations and their considerable financial contributions to the various budgets of these operations and to the regular United Nations budget.

We therefore believe that it is only fair that these countries be given special consideration, since they meet the criteria necessary to fulfil the role expected of them. In this regard, my delegation believes that the Italian proposal on an increase in non-permanent seats merits further consideration, interest and study. At the same time, we draw attention to Tunisia's valuable proposal and believe that it, too, merits serious consideration.

As for the reform and improvement of the Security Council's working methods and its relations with other United Nations organs, in particular the General Assembly, Kuwait supports all proposals aimed at providing increased transparency and clarity in the work of the Security Council and an increased flow of information to and from the Member States. We also affirm the need for the Security Council continuously and systematically to consult with States directly or indirectly interested in and concerned with the issues and conflicts under discussion, as this practice would enhance the legitimacy and the credibility of Security Council decisions on such issues.

We also call on the Security Council to develop and implement consultation procedures with the States contributing to peacekeeping operations and urge that such cooperation, coordination and consultation be maintained through all stages of peacekeeping operations. The Security Council should regularly inform the troop-contributing countries on the political and security developments that may be of interest to them.

As for the question of the veto, my delegation considers that there have been several constructive and objective proposals that merit serious consideration, within the framework of the Working Group, in the search for a consensus formula that satisfies all parties and will ensure the Security Council's ability to carry out its tasks without hindrance.

Finally, we hope that the efforts and discussions of the Working Group will be crowned with the success of a consensus that ensures and enhances the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security and allows the Council to benefit from past experience in dealing with current events and facing future challenges.

The President took the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: I have an announcement to make in connection with the election of the five members of the

International Court of Justice, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 6 November. I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the relevant documents.

First, document A/51/333-S/1996/722 sets out the composition of the Court and the procedure for the election in the General Assembly and in the Security Council.econdly, document A/51/335-S/1996/724 contains the curricula vitae of the candidates. Thirdly, document A/51/334-S/1996/723 contains the list of candidates submitted within the required time for submission; and, finally, document A/51/417-S/1996/794 and Add.1 contains additional nominations received after 31 August 1996.

In this regard, an additional nomination has been received since the issuance of the documents I have just mentioned. As members are aware, additional nominations are submitted in support of candidatures presented within the established deadline.

In order to facilitate the preparation and conduct of the election procedure, it would seem desirable that the Assembly have before it, as it has in the past, a consolidated and updated list of candidates. Accordingly, if there is no objection, I shall request the Secretariat to issue a consolidated and updated list of candidates under the symbol A/51/334/Rev.1-S/1996/723/Rev.1, so as to reflect all the information received since the issuance of the original list and thus facilitate the election for all representatives.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly so decides.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.